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ABSTRACT

The theme of this journal concerns democracy and citizenship education at universities. An editorial, "The Postmodern Blues" (Bernard Murchland), examines the negative citizen attitudes during the election campaign of Bill Clinton. The five civic education roundtable articles represent two position papers and three responses. The first position paper, "Citizenship Education and the Public World" (Harry C. Boyte), proposes that civic education should be designed to move students to reflect on their lives and careers in ways that allow integration of concerns with larger arenas of governance and policy. The second position paper, "Going to the Community" (Benjamin Barber), looks at the context for a democratic education and the choices for community service. In response to the positions by Boyte and Barber, Craig Rimmerman raises issues of critical education for citizenship and discusses implementation of the approach. Tim Stanton presents three challenges that arise from work as a community organizer. Leslie Hill addresses the issues of power and the nature of the citizen. Following the roundtable articles, "Philanthropy and Liberal Education" (Robert L. Payton), reflects on the place of voluntary action for the public good in a university education. The final article, "The Failure of Community in Higher Education," a back page commentary, (Carole Hamner) emphasizes the divisive atmosphere that results from the ideological encampment of academics and the alarming ramifications for the training of the next generation's citizens. (CK)

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Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall 1992

A JOURNAL RELATING LIBERAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC LIFE

ED 405 235

The Civic Arts Review

A Civic Education Roundtable On

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

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Position Papers By Harry Boyte and Benjamin Barber

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With Responses By

Leslie Hill
Craig Rimmerman
Tim Stanton

Plus

PHILANTHROPY AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

Robert Payton

THE FAILURE OF COMMUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Carole Hamner

And

THE POSTMODERN BLUES

An Editorial

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The Civic Arts Review

Vol. 5, No. 4 **Fall, 1992**

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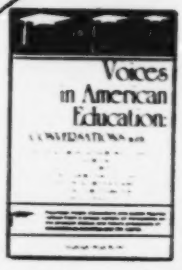

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Editorial

THE POSTMODERN BLUES

During the recent election campaign pollsters reported that never before had negative attitudes on the part of the citizenry run so high. On the Sunday before election day **The New York Times** analyzed the public mood in terms of "a deep malaise." "People are scared and resigned," opined the **Times**, "scared that the economy has irreparable flaws; scared that the country is adrift; resigned to a visceral feeling that the next Presient will not be able to do much about it." Numerous pundits echoed this note throughout the year. One of them cynically suggested that a line in the national anthem should be changed to read: "The land of the semi-free and the home of the timorous." Even Walter Mondale was heard from. "I can tell you," he said, "that the American people know the political system is not working and they sense deeply a need for change. The alienation this year is the worst I have ever seen." One of the most disturbing analyses came in a Knight-Ridder report prepared by the Harwood Group. In it we were informed that "the American dream is in danger;" "a new misery index is taking hold in America;" "the sacred trust between citizens and public officials has been broken;" "people do not feel connected to something larger than themselves." And so on and so forth in that vein.

One might legitimately ask what underlay all the bellyaching. Was there anything of any political or philosophical significance going on?

Maybe.

For one thing the election year was an occasion for the American people to get in touch with and reassert their Puritan heritage. As Christopher Lasch reminded us in these pages some issues back (Fall, 1991) Puritanism remains our deepest reservoir of moral idealism. The Puritans wrestled with mighty mysteries and at the heart of their vision is a divine discontent with the conditions of existence, a protest against the inadequacies of our achievements, a hope that things can be better. That view of reality is at the very base of the meaning of America and when Americans grow smug and complacent, as they sometimes do, they are not their real selves. So discontent on the order of magnitude we recently witnessed may be taken as a good omen.

Something else was reflected during the year. The public sent a strong signal that they no longer have much stomach for politics as usual. And indeed one of the lessons of postmodern thought is that politics as usual is impossible. All our conventional political categories have undergone (are undergoing) radical shifts in meaning: representation, power, legitimacy, the nature of government, even democracy itself. All of our root assumptions are up for re-examination. Postmodernism is of course as much a mood as a school of thought and is in any case a term difficult to pin down with any precision. Its political implications have been stated with reasonable clarity by Agnes Heller. She writes: "The very foundation of postmodernity consists of viewing the world as a plurality of heterogeneous spaces and temporalities; it indicates the social and political prevalence of the functional over the structural, the gradual weakening, if not total disappearance, of a politics based soley on class interests and class perceptions." As an illustration, think of how obsolete have become the coalitions that traditionally formed along a left-right axis. Or how our values no longer divide sharply along Party lines.

Perhaps the lasting lesson of the election was that Americans did not vote for a Party so much as for a different and more effective way of conducting their political business. They were in a highly deconstructive mode and called for a practice of politics that is more de-centered, participatory, pluralistic, value-based and pragmatic. One might be justified in reading into this a rebirth of a vital public sphere. David Broder said as much in one of his columns where he wrote: "Election Day was the logical culmination of a political year that, more than any in my memory, was dominated from beginning to end by the will of the public."

Bill Clinton take note! □

A Roundtable On

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The Civic Education Roundtable, reported substantially in the following pages, took place at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, in Chicago, on September 3, 1992. It was organized and chaired by Richard Battistoni of Baylor University, currently on leave at Rutgers University where he is directing a program in citizen education and community service. In introducing the Roundtable Battistoni said: "We thought it appropriate that the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, which at its origin almost 100 years ago dealt mostly with citizen education and public service, but which has professionalized and moved quite far afield from those concerns, would be an ideal place to continue the discussion that's going on across the country about what it means to educate for citizenship, how community service relates to that and the role of democratic theory with respect to both." Position papers were presented by Harry Boyte and Benjamin Barber with responses by Craig Rimmerman, Tim Stanton and Leslie Hill.

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC WORLD

Harry C. Boyte

We need a conception of citizenship that is active, engaged and adequate to the challenges of our complicated world. Citizens develop, they do not emerge full blown; and their capacities are cultivated only through tough, challenging, serious practical and theoretical education in what Benjamin Barber has well termed the democratic arts. Barber and I agree on the importance of a strong conception of citizenship; on the centrality of civic education to any honest rendering of education in a purported democracy; and on the significant challenge such a view of civic education presents to customary ways of conceiving citizenship, education, and service. Moreover, I greatly appreciate the leadership that Benjamin Barber and Rutgers University have provided in renewing collegiate interest in civic education.

Harry C. Boyte, a senior fellow at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, is author of **The Backyard Revolution** *and co-founder of Project Public Life, a national partnership for the renewal of American politics.*

The Nature and Ends of Politics

Where we have differences is about the content and pedagogy of civic education. These differences grow from differing views on the nature and ends of politics, what it is that students learn to practice as they become citizens and, closely linked, the nature of the arenas in which such politics takes place. For Barber, community forms both the condition and also the end of civic politics. I argue, in contrast, that the aim of civic education should be to develop students' capacities to act with effect and with public spirit in a diverse, turbulent public world made up of multiple and fractured communities.

Although they overlap, our perspectives also have different axial concepts – community versus public; and they have different central emphases – a shared way of life versus practical politics. In many respects, my exchange with Ben today is of a piece with an ongoing debate that I have had recently with the Communitarian Platform group formed by Amitai Etzioni and William Galston, in which Barber is also a leading figure. An elaboration of these differences is forthcoming in the October issue of

their magazine, **The Responsive Community**. Although I have disagreements with the Communitarian Platform, I believe that their general project – the re-engagement of political theory with the current challenges of politics – is very important indeed.

For communitarians, the concept of community shapes both the ends and pedagogy of civic education. Communitarians like Barber hold that the aim of civic education should be a shared life in a participatory community. Moreover, the *process* of learning such politics must be communal. As Barber put it, "civic education should be communal as well as community based. If citizen education and experiential learning of the kind offered by community service are to be a lesson in community, the ideal learning unit is not the individual but the small team, where people work together and learn together, experiencing what it means to become a small community together."

Despite differences between Barber and John Dewey in other respects, Barber's approach helps to retrieve the Deweyian alternative to the institutionally focused civic education – what is called "civics" – that most of us have suffered through at some time. The Deweyian alternative generates a very different understanding of citizenship than that conveyed by high school trips to Washington or classes on "how a bill becomes law." Like Dewey, Barber sees democracy as an organic way of life and his pedagogical theory holds that civic education proceeds through ever-expanding communal identifications. Dewey's argument in **The Public and Its Problems** thus has strikingly contemporary overtones, "Vital and thorough attachments are bred only in the intimacy of an intercourse which is of necessity restricted in range ... Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community."

The communitarian approach to civic education and to politics more broadly has important strengths as a critique of thin, rights-based and institutionally-focused views of the citizen's role. Moreover, against the background of the polarized, moralistic clashes of our time – and the right wing crusade this election year to expunge from acceptable political discourse any pluralist understandings of religion, family, patriotism and much else – liberal communitarians have developed a welcome middle ground of discussion about values that balances contending principles of free expression and individual development with social obligation. Their efforts are attentive to the real-world conflicted political landscape about values that their left wing critics neglect.

Yet there is another current of citizenship education that I am convinced is more fruitful for teaching the active, multi-dimensional understanding of public agency needed in our time. This is the civic education that takes place when people learn the politics of public problem-solving, defined as the give-and-take, messy, everyday activity in which citizens set about dealing with the general issues of their public worlds.

Throughout American history, the process of public problem-solving has been the way that millions of citizens developed a sense of their stake in the nation, their capacity to act as citizens, and their self-identification as "citizens." For instance, immigrants in the first several decades of the 20th century learned practical politics and citizenship in political mediating institutions like settlement houses, neighborhood schools, reform press groups, the Workmen's Circle, active unions and other forms of worker organizations that created a sense of economic "citizenship" as well as community involvement. These

"I argue for the kind of civic education that takes place when people learn the politics of public problem-solving, defined as the give-and-take, messy, everyday activity in which citizens set about dealing with the general issues of the public world."

connected peoples' everyday lives to the larger public arena in a fashion that taught a variety of public skills and roles. Similarly, in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s Southern blacks long excluded from public life developed a parallel version of such civic education in the hundreds of citizenship classes sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Yet such civic education has been far more developed in the real world than in the works of 20th century American political theorists. Though the argument's full articulation is beyond the scope of this presentation, I want to note that while the American pragmatic tradition for which John Dewey served as a pivotal architect has insights and resources to offer a theory of civic education in this vein, the conceptions of politics and the public world offered here are more akin to those of continental theorists such as Simone Weil, Hannah Arendt, and Jurgen Habermas than to American political thinkers.

Problem-solving, as employed in the civic education that I advocate, is not a narrowly utilitarian term. It involves values such as respect for human dignity and different points of view, an openness to the long-term, a will-

ingness to think of one's own particular interests in light of the needs of the whole. Finally, it entails learning a constellation of concepts and the translation of concepts into effective public action.

As background, it is important to note that service and information-based institutional life rest upon a widespread assumption that most people are unconcerned with and incompetent at theorizing their daily experiences – unable to look in a systematic, analytical way at the general concepts that structure their environments. The consequence of this assumption is that education, including civic education, focuses on conveying bodies of knowledge, information, and discrete skills. Further along, professional training involves the application of bodies of specialized knowledge through systematic techniques and methodologies. This technical and information-driven focus is reproduced widely within service and information environments.

People rarely, if ever, have the chance to make explicit, think, debate, reflect upon, and engage seriously diverse points of view about the underlying conceptual schema and frameworks that organize and structure their actual practices. As a result, most remain entirely dependent on the hidden class of conceptualizers, who themselves are seldom challenged by real world practitioners or by disciplinary perspectives beyond their own training. Our world overflows with technical assistants, consultants, program managers. Few, indeed, have learned to think well about what they are doing or why they are doing it.

Even most activists assume that most people are anti-intellectual and only concerned with the immediate and particular: the issue, the campaign, the cause. More than a dozen training centers have emerged in the last two decades to teach community organizing, lobbying, and political action. Virtually all focus on concrete skills, techniques, and information: how to chair a meeting; put together a leaflet; do an "action"; how to form a coalition; target "the enemy"; mobilize one's resources around the chosen issue.

In contrast, an approach to civic education focusing on conceptual skills combines systematic reflection on political and civic concepts and practice with their application, out of the view that political practices are always, in part, *constituted* by one's conceptual framework and repertoire. Such an approach cultivates capacities for the exercise of practical judgment, critical thinking, and self-evaluation that are crucial to strong and effective citizenship in our fractured, multi-layered world.

I argue that the concepts most important to a framework that structures effective action in the public world are public space, interest, power, and politics as practically-oriented and citizen-centered. This constellation distills the lessons of a three year experimental project in civic education, Project Public Life based at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. We work with a wide variety of groups – teenagers, low income parents, 4-H, rural communities, health workers, nursing home residents, government employees, as well as my graduate students – to generate a sustainable re-engagement with politics and an approach through which people reconceptualize themselves as active citizens.

The Public Arena and the Fragmentation of Social Space

We have found that the concept of the public world as a diverse, pluralist, heterogeneous social space of many different interests, viewpoints, communities, and histories holds the potential to address effectively the fragmentation of social spaces today. This fragmentation, for which communitarians have no solution, means that almost everyone experiences multiple and fractured communities of culture, gender, work, interest, voluntary group, geography and the like. Moreover, local communities seem radically distant from the world of large institutions that stand over us like granite mountains on the social landscape. A concept of the public arena gives people a conceptual and linguistic framework to understand themselves as serious agents – responsible, creative citizens – in solving public problems of concern to them in a fashion that is attentive to impact on the larger society. Public language helps people to draw upon their own interests and histories, to recognize and develop their capacities, and to envision work with others with whom they do not wish to live "in community."

Public spaces are environments that are open, accessible and involve a mix of different people and groups. In such settings, principles of democratic action involve political arts such as developing political relationships, listening and speaking well, understanding and practicing power, negotiating and bargaining, practicing judgment, holding participants accountable. Moreover, the aim of politics is common action on significant problems, which means the ability to work pragmatically with a variety of others, whether or not one likes them. Blacks in the Woodlawn area of Chicago and white ethnics in Cicero, for instance, have different views of racial justice, based on different histories. Seeking common understanding is liable to deepen awareness of the divide, without any mechanism for bridging it; in contrast, finding ways to work together on issues like housing can notably improve race relations. Similarly, the search for a communal consensus between Jewish pro-choice women and Hispanic Catholic pro-life women can drown out the possibility of collaboration on problems like teen pregnancy. When groups with divergent understandings of justice and morality develop practical work together out of different interests, they may continue to have radically different points of view on basic issues. But they often learn mutual respect.

Public principles of action overlap with but also are distinguishable from the capacities developed in both private life and community. In private life, for example,

we assume similarity of outlook and belief. In the public world it is much more effective to assume dissimilarity and to investigate others' interests and values. In private, we want love, intimacy, loyalty. In public, principles such as respect, recognition, and accountability are more workable bases for democratic action.

Unlike classical republicanism, which emerged from the small community of the polis and sharply separated the public world from the private, this approach shows the distinctions but also connections between public and private. Personal concerns commonly draw people into the public arena, but the best principles for democratic action in public are different than those in private life. We define community as the overlapping and intermediate realm between personal and public environments, with its own characteristics and principles of action. None of this can be neatly categorized: every environment includes some mixture of public and private and communal aspects. But the art of effective politics involves, crucially, the ability to understand in what kind of space one currently is acting.

Public space has two elaborations – localized public spaces and mediating political institutions – that strengthen the understanding and practice of active citizenship. Localized public spaces – free spaces – are environments that offer possibilities for reintegrating everyday life experiences, places not excessively dominated by one particular perspective but rather where one encounters diverse viewpoints, arguments, ways of looking at and defining problems. Public spaces, moreover, have their own resources, challenges, and dynamics that teach lessons indispensable to civic education not found in smaller communities.

For instance, in Project Public Life we have found that teenage teams taking on problem-solving projects are best inspired and challenged by initial larger conferences where they encounter groups of teens with very different backgrounds and interests. These larger public events prove much more powerful motivators to reflect on concepts of "citizenship" and public-connection than a progression from small team communities outward. Such spaces allow different perspectives and interests to surface. They create environments for students to draw upon their experiences in settings infused with other educational insights. Public spaces provide students with chances to learn civic skills such as chairing meetings, speaking, working with diversity and negotiating different viewpoints, handling conflict, and listening. In sum, skill in public space allows students to develop a sense of themselves as public, able actors on a larger stage.

Drawing attention to the concept of the public arena also allows students to think strategically about possibilities for deprofessionalizing the mediating political institutions which connect peoples' daily experiences with larger environments. This is done not by denying the usefullness of professional information but by locating it in a larger context of many frames of reference and sources of knowledge useful in addressing public issues, what might best be called a return to "common sense." Political parties, unions, settlement houses, service agencies, schools, and other organizations once connected peoples' everyday lives to the larger world of public governance and policy in ways that created an obvious, vivid *stake* in politics. These mediating institutions continue to connect peoples' lives to the larger public world. But they have become recast in a professional-client pattern. Yet in Project Public Life we have discovered that groups like campus service programs, Extension Services, many public and parochial school teachers and health provider organizations are aware of the inadequacy of excessively professionalized delivery approaches in which experts simply deliver services to client populations.

"People rarely have the chance to think about the underlying conceptual frameworks that organize and structure their actual practices. As a result, most remain entirely dependent on a hidden class of conceptualizers who themselves are rarely challenged by real world practitioners or by disciplinary perspectives beyond their own."

Such groups can be engaged with the idea of practical citizenship education in ways that suggest new mechanisms for connecting peoples' lives to larger arenas of decision making and policy. Extension agents using the conceptual map of a public-spirited "citizen politics," for instance, have changed their approach when communities ask for aid on issues like teenage suicide. Instead of simply deliverying "expert advice," they pose the problem as a public issue about which citizens, including young people, must come to grips, talk through, and take action.

Interest, Power, and Elite Biases of Knowledge Systems.

Modern societies have seen an extraordinary elaboration in the pattern of elite and technical domination of policy-making that Max Weber first noted in detail. Weber proposed that authority in industrial societies was shifting to those who organized and controlled scientific and technical knowledge and who exercised control over the interpretation and application of such knowledge. At the center of this is the emergence of specialized languages and methods through which experts define problems, identify remedies, and evaluate success.

As a result, the service world has developed a distinctive language with expansive claims to humanize society through teaching "care" and "concern." Such claims, moreover, find expression in community service programs, which focus strongly on individual helping and one-on-one interventions.

This language greatly complicates any understanding of civic education that involves systematic exploration of a dynamics of power, interest, and politics. Yet concepts of interest, understood broadly, not narrowly, and power, understood in interactive, relational terms allow civic education to make explicit the dynamics that normally function in a hidden fashion.

"Interest," in this rendering, is distinguishable from selfishness or from selflessness. It is different from the self-sacrifice and loyalty that characterize personal relations and personal space (one might well sacrifice all for one's child, for instance). But it is also different from the conventional equation of "self-interest" with its narrow calculation of individual gain. Interest (from the Latin, *inter esse*, meaning to be between) means a serious exploration and analysis of the passions, history, and meanings that move people to public action. It means recognition that concepts of "self" and "interest" are dynamic, changing over time. In the case of students, self-interests typically involve not only personal motivations, but also entail reflection on evolving identifications with various communities of reference and identity like "African-American" or "future journalist."

Moreover, students need to think extensively and well about the contours of power in the modern world. This includes but goes beyond traditional views of power as a set of largely zero-sum and one directional interactions based on scarce resources (capital, position), where one party "has" power and the other "lacks" it. Power analysis involves a more interactive, dynamic view that recognizes the fashion in which even in situations of considerable inequality there are always reciprocal and mutually transformative dimensions to power interaction. It also entails attention to the way many contemporary institutions are organized around professional expertise and information resources and are challenged by assertions of communal authority or moral appeal by dispossessed and powerless groups. These dynamics are inevitably complex, multidimensional and far from zero-sum.

Acknowledging self-interests – that everyone has a personal stake and reason and history, a narrative, behind their actions – and power relations – that the assertion of knowledge claims always involves power-laden acts – shatters the norms of service in a double sense. Service and information systems typically mystify the relations of power and interest embedded within them. In service systems experts define and diagnose the problem, generate the labels for talking about it, propose remedial techniques, and evaluate whether the problem has been solved. Yet helpers present themselves simply as objective, caring people, whose interest is only in serving the client.

For students, assuming the role of apprentice-service providers, denial of their interests and power creates a pose of altruistic care that they are likely to carry with them. For low income people and other "recipients" of such care, in contrast, the denial by providers of their own stake and power makes it difficult to assert with confidence any disagreements with expert advice or to resist being infantilized.

Liberal, democratically inclined theorists of human development both identify and illustrate these problems. Thus, for instance, Robert Kegan, a Harvard theorist and practitioner who synthesizes psychoanalytic and existential-phenomenological approaches to developmental theory, keenly depicts the condescension in client-professional relations, from education to psychology. According to Kegan, in typical therapeutic transactions, "the natural supports of family, peer groups, work roles and love relationships come to be seen as merely amateur approximations of professional wisdom." Kegan argues that "American mental health workers are themselves vulnerable to what amounts to the *goals of adjustment*, couched in terms of health, which lead to equal – and probably equally unwitting – exercises in social control" as found in totalitarian societies.

Kegan suggests that at its best, professional aid, "rather than being a panacea for modern maladies, is actually a second-best means of support." Psychologists can better practice their art when they recognize that "clients" can never be understood in terms of "stages" of their development. People are instead "their (own) creations, the meaning makers, not the made-meaning. The existing model of development intervention too easily translates into the goal of 'getting people to advance stages.'".

Despite his democratic intentions, however, Kegan reflects the limits of the service world. Thus, he neglects entirely any client-centered approaches to problem-solving, such as the growing self-help movement. He overlooks the interactive quality of relationships between professional and client, in which both parties always impact each other. Instead, he aims at an ethic of all-encompassing and boundless care on the part of the care-giver. Such a goal, hoping to humanize the world, ends up mystifying real interests and power relations with inevitable moral one-upsmanship. Though skeptical of the expansive claims made by care givers, he proposes as his solution a "culture of intimacy" as the highest form of human development, and an unbounded, unlimited openness by professionals to suffering of all kinds. Such a proposal reproduces on a personal level the limitless, totalizing logic that can be found in the public realm in the most sweeping of ideological politics. In practice this sort of language makes it far more difficult for gullible clients to see the professional as another human being, with interests, background and fallibilities, like their own.

A language of care hides the dynamics of public environments: recognition of different interests, conflicts, power. It creates the pattern that C. Wright Mills once observed as characteristic of modern society, shifting the focus from public problems to private discontents. In contrast, attention to self-interest and power "publicizes" hidden dimensions of the service world.

Citizen Politics, Not Innocence

A personally and narratively grounded engagement with themes of citizenship is, finally, considerably reinforced by attention to understandings of politics and action that develop a view of the citizen as a multidimensional actor. Today both liberals and critical intellectuals reproduce a spectator role for citizens. In academic and intellectual discourse, "ordinary people" tend to be seen as either marginal actors – voters, for instance, or consumers and clients of government – or victims of the unilateral operation of power. In consequence, citizens lose the middle ground of public action where the point is neither vindication nor talk but rather practical engagement in the complex process of creating the world. Yet without a framework for politics that puts citizens into the equation as central agents, ordinary people remain unaccountable, irresponsible outsiders who imagine themselves pure and "innocent" of any role in the world's problems. The resonances of citizen are narrowed to roles such as voter, volunteer, ideological partisan, client, expert, and community member.

By way of contrast, a view of politics as citizen-centered and also as historicized, full of contradiction, ambiguity, and practical tasks, prompts several important understandings. It allows students and others to recognize their inevitable involvement – their "complicity," in a sense, in the creation of the world – by highlighting the ubiquitous nature of politics. Such a process begins by developing students' capacities to "map" the political dimensions of their environments. Almost everyone tends to do political mapping individually and intuitively (think how often teenagers analyze "who likes whom," the power relations among different factions and interests, the reasons for subgroups forming). Yet people almost never learn systematic tools and concepts with which to do such analysis.

Citizen education which is designed to create what we call such political mapping offers a wider range of options than is available in service programs. For instance, I assign teams to report on diverse public and political environments, from neighborhood organizations to city bureaucracies, and to analyze them using concepts like power, interest, politics, accountability.

In experiential projects, attention to the everyday practice of citizen politics encourages people to learn the daily strategic practices and thinking that can lead to significant democratization of systems. People figure out how to "do politics," with attention to larger public goods, rather than to imagine themselves as outsiders.

In sum, civic education should be designed to move students to reflect on their lives and careers in ways that allow them to integrate their concerns with larger arenas of governance and policy, and help them to understand and develop their capacities to act effectively in such arenas as well as in their everyday environments. The concept of public is much more useful than community in accomplishing such reflection. It prompts recognition of the radically different interests, values, and trajectories through which people learn to engage the public world in their distinctive styles. The notion of the public arena also draws attention to a "commonwealth" – an exchange of reciprocal public obligations and public goods. Practical politics in a public vein has the potential to deepen mutual respect and realization of shared fate because of what might be called the law of unintended political consequences: mutual respect, discovery of commonality, and even "civic virtue" are most often products of action which has far different aims. □

GOING TO THE COMMUNITY

Benjamin Barber

Let me offer three points. First, I want to take a few minutes to set the context for a democratic education. I want to cite six or seven key choices that I think anybody who's interested in community service as a vehicle of citizen education needs to face and which we face at Rutgers as do other universities around the the country. Thirdly, I want to address Harry Boyte's thoughtful criticisms of communitarianism.

The Context of Democratic Education

First to set the context with a few remarks. Because we regard ourselves as born free we tend to take our liberty for granted. We assume that our freedom can be enjoyed without responsibility and that like some great perpetual motion machine our democracy can run forever without the fuel of civic activity by engaged citizens. The most sympathetic overseas critic America has known, Alexis de Toqueville, issued a warning to all would-be democrats. "There is nothing so arduous as the apprenticeship of liberty," he wrote. Today there's endless talk about education but between the hysteria and the cynicism there seems to be little room for civic learning, hardly any at all for democracy. Yet a fundamental task of education in a democracy is the apprenticeship of liberty – learning to be free. While we root our fragile freedom in the myth that we are born free, we are in truth born dependent. We are born fragile, we are born needy, we are born ignorant, we are born unformed, we are born weak, we are born foolish, we are born unimaginative. We're born small, defenseless, unthinking infants. We are in fact born in chains and only acquire liberty through civil society. Our dependency is both physical, we need each other and can't survive alone, and psychological. Our identity is forged in a dialectical relationship with others. This is where I think the communitarian perspective is necessary and where the public politics response advocated by Boyte is simply inadequate to the deep psychological need we have to forge an identity in the company of others. Consequently we are all embedded, like it or not, in families and tribes and in communities. The only question we face is what kind of communities will they be. Will they be communities of blood, tribal communities, exclusive communities, or will they be open and inclusive democratic communities? That's the choice. The choice isn't whether we'll be individual and free from one another to live in communities of dependency.

In short we have to learn to be free. We have to be taught liberty. We have to be taught to become persons and citizens. We are born belonging to others. We quite literally belong to our parents. We have to learn how to sculpt our individualities from common clay. The great mistake of liberalism is the myth that we start out free and then join together somehow. The truth is, as any psychologist, anthropologist or sociologist will tell us, we're born joined and have to find ways to separate ourselves and understand ourselves as individuals and that happens through civic education. The literacy required to live in civil society, the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberatively in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permits us to hear and to accommodate others – these are skills that have to be acquired. It is important to remind ourselves of this, particularly in America where we are all children of a Lockean tradition which insists that we are born free, that we are individuals to start with, and the civic task is the task of the social contract, how to bring ourselves together and learn to live together. The real skill is to learn how to live apart, to learn how to separate

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ourselves and live as free beings in what are otherwise the natural communities of dependency into which we are born.

Some Questions About Community Service

Now to take a leap from that general theoretical perspective, let me talk about community service and experiential education as a part of the apprenticeship of liberty. This is an unfinished task in most colleges and universities in America. Let me not try here to justify community service as a form of civic education but rather pose for you some critical choices that must be faced if you already agree that it is.

The first and most important choice about community service is whether or not it should be curricular or extracurricular. Campus Compact and Cool started with the notion that their job was to organize in an extracurricular fashion those students who were interested in community service and make sure there were ample opportunities to do so. In other words, their choice was to say that community service need not have a direct curricular connection. I believe that community service must be a part of the curriculum if it is to be effective and I have three reasons for saying that. First of all, we have to remember that we are all educators and we work in educational institutions. We don't work in social agencies. There's a tendency on the part of some service programs to think that somehow their students are becoming little mini-service agencies. It is not the job of colleges and universities or indeed high schools or primary schools to solve America's social problems directly. We can't do it, we shouldn't do it, we're not equipped to do it. What we are qualifed to do is educate the young and if we believe that citizen education is a vital part of that education and believe that community service will reinforce citizen education, then we have to root community service in the curriculum in a serious way. The second reason is that educational institutions are themselves communities. Students live in a community, although often school communities are among the most corrupt, fragmented, alienating of all the communities to which we are likely to belong. We all know particularly in large universities, that is the case. There is in fact a strong argument to be made that many of the pathologies associated with young people derive in part from their alienation from the communities they belong to. Because the school is a community it's terribly important to root teaching in the primary community to which people actually belong. A third reason is that educational institutions are part of the larger community. The relationship between the two, traditionally town-gown relations, is in a sense emblematic of the larger problem of small communities existing within larger communities. A fourth somewhat secondary but nonetheless important reason is that programs that are extracurricular will be treated as a kind of second-class education. They're seen as do-good or touchy-feely or nonrigorous forms of education. Unless they are hooked in a rigorous way to a curriculum that involves distinguished faculty and honors students, they will be looked down upon.

The second choice is whether community service should be mandatory or voluntary. In my mind, despite the difficulties, there's no question that it must be mandatory and there are two very significant reasons. One is if you make it voluntary you're preaching to the converted. It is the majority of students, who are not going to volunteer that precisely needs to learn the meaning of civic responsibility. The second reason is that all education is coercive and authoritative. We force students to do all kinds of things all the time. We shut them up for hours at a time while we lecture at them. We tell them what they have to take to graduate and so on. To say that in this vital area of democratic education we can't require certain courses is utterly inconsistent with the authoritative character of all education.

"Because we regard ourselves as born free we tend to take our liberty for granted. We assume that our freedom can be enjoyed without responsibility and that like some great perpetual motion machine our democracy can run forever without the fuel of civic activity by engaged citizens. In short, we have to learn to be free. We have to be taught liberty."

The third choice is between the civic and the philanthropic. What's the point of these programs? To induce civic values or induce values that have to do with philanthropy and charity. Again, in the last 15 or 20 years many people who have supported the Points of Life Foundation and community service see it as a way of engendering what I would call 19th century values of *noblesse oblige*. Serve your inferiors; go out and do something for the poor once in your life. In places like Stanford and Harvard many of the students come from advantaged families and service tends to be seen as a way of paying back society. William Buckley in his book **Gratitude** suggests this. Those of us who are well off owe something to others. I would urge as an alternative to the philanthropic model, the model of civic responsibility. Here we're talking not about altruism versus self-interest but about enlightened self-interest. Students ought to do community service not

simply because they help the community, but because they help themselves; for them to be effective citizens and to live in a world which nourishes their liberty others must be free too. So community service is an aspect of the development of an enlightened form of civic self-interest, not an exercise in altruism.

A fourth choice is between one course to satisfy this requirement or a bottom up approach with many different courses and different schools and different departments. I favor the latter; I think it is a more flexible and pluralistic approach. But that choice does have to be made.

Fifth, do you engage students in the actual planning process or do you do it top down from the administration? My choice is always to engage students in the process of planning a program.

How do you treat the community service agencies you work with? Do you treat them as partners in education or potential clients for service? My suggestion is to go to the community agencies and say, "Will you help us educate our students in citizenship and responsibility? In return you may get some service but you may not. It may turn out that what you get is hardly worth the training time you put into it. We're certainly not there to solve your problems." That has a twofold effect. It makes it clear that we're engaged in civic pedagogy and not in social service but it actually does a very nice thing for the service agencies and their clients as well. It gives them a sense that they're actually contributing to the education of people and are not simply victims getting the help of well-off students.

Finally, do you treat service as something individuals do in the community or as something groups or teams of students do? It's my view that putting students into teams – tiny communities, squadrons, platoons to use William James' moral equivalent of war imagery – is the way to go. By putting students together where they have to actually cooperate with one another, is to teach the lesson of community from the very beginning.

A Less Polarized View

Now let me address the dilemma Boyte brought up. I think he's very right. I think he's identified a historical problem and it's a very real problem, though I think he draws the distinction more sharply than I would because I think there's more of a dialectical feed between the two. It's really the old problem that all democratic theorists raise. On the one hand is the claim that democratic community works ideally when you have people with shared history, shared value, shared religion, who start with common ground so that the general will is nothing more than an expression of their commonality and democracy in a certain sense traditionally was designed for such communities. But, as we know, modern industrial societies are diversified and fragmented and democracy has become the forging of artifical values around problem solving in the absence of such common ground. Those are the two paradigms. I think Boyte's right to say that most modern societies, particularly in places like America, are diversified, are pluralistic, and to assume that you'll get common ground, common religions or moral values is not only unlikely but probably even dangerous.

But on the other hand, it's a mistake to think the choice of public politics as a problem solving activity won't itself engender commonality. The kind of politics Boyte rightly suggests in fact engenders new shared values and a new sense of binding and a new sense of community which is more than just problem solving. What happens is that people who are in it together solving common problems come away feeling they have an identity which goes beyond just the fact they worked on a common problem. We find that in our community service teams. Students who are different work together and do community service together and thus create a new bond. This is William James' moral equivalent of war imagery again. A platoon of soldiers drawn from many different backgrounds is bound together in a fight against a common enemy in ways that bind them for life. That happens in democratic politics as well. People who work in a campaign are bound. They come out with an identity that goes beyond just having solved some problems or achieved some common goals. So, to put it a little differently, I would say that one of the objects of public problem solving is to solve public problems, but another object is to create a framework, a communal framework, within which people can find new forms of identity to compensate for the loss of traditional tribal, ethnic, and religious identities which once held democratic communities together. That's why I take a less polarized view of the two paradigms than Boyte does. □

RESPONSES TO BOYTE AND BARBER

CRAIG RIMMERMAN

My presentation will be in three parts. I'm going to raise some broad issues of what I call critical education for citizenship and then talk about how we try to implement such an approach in a senior-level course at Hobart and William Smith Colleges called "AIDS Crises and Challenges" and end with some reflections in light of what Boyte and Barber have touched on.

I think it's ironic that at the very moment that Eastern Europe is celebrating a transition to a Western-style democracy we in the United States are becoming increasingly critical of our own. Two recent books, E.J. Dionne's **Why Americans Hate Politics** and William Greider's **Who Will Tell the People**, do a superb job of highlighting what Greider calls the betrayal of American democracy. A broad level of citizen disaffection with American politics was measured by the Harwood group study **Citizen and Politics** prepared for the Kettering Foundation in 1991. The Harwood group found that Americans do care about politics but they no longer believe that they can have an effect. They feel politically impotent. Citizens feel cut off from most policy issues because of the way they are framed and talked about. Citizens think many of the avenues for expressing their views are window dressing, not serious attempts to hear the public. They feel they are heard only when they organize into large groups and angrily protest policy decisions. For those of us in higher education it seems to me that we're uniquely situated to evaluate citizen disaffection and to devise pedagogical strategies in the curriculum that will enable our students to grapple with the meaning of citizenship, democracy and public participation in compelling ways.

Political scientists have much to offer as we tackle these questions in our teaching, our research and in our community work. We can best achieve our educational goals by pursuing a model of education that I might call critical education for citizenship. I'd like to give you some sense of what I mean by this. Its characteristics might include the following: It must be interdisciplinary in nature and you'll notice that this course I participated in was taught by someone in English and Theater as well as a sociologist and myself; it must focus on public policy concerns and allow students to see the importance of participating in public decisions; it asks educators and students to conceive of democracy broadly to include community discussions, community action, public service, and protest politics; and it asks us to consider the strengths and weaknesses of all the forms of participation that I've just described.

It also, it seems to me, should study democracy in the workplace as reflected in workplace democracy and workplace self-management schemes. After all, it is in the workplace that most of us are going to spend most of our lives and here we can make important and crucial connections between the political and economic spheres. Critical education for citizenship also takes into account the relationship between gender, race and class concerns in the participatory process and, finally, it asks us to challenge our own as well as our students' assumptions regarding power and leadership. As educators it seems to me absolutely crucial that we deconstruct our own positions of power in the context of the classroom.

Let me say a few words about the course on AIDS I've already referred to. It was created and designed as a requirement for all seniors in order to address current issues from moral and global perspectives. We wanted values to be confronted head on before our students go out into the world or enter graduate school. Students themselves participated in the creation of this course. As a matter of fact, the course originated when I went to a meeting of students who invited me to attend a planning session for AIDS Awareness Week and they asked me what courses were going to be taught about AIDS next year? When I said we needed a senior forum they went wild. One of the most rewarding things for me as someone who is very interested in these concerns was to work with students in planning the course. They had no idea of the amount of work that goes into putting a course together. They enjoyed the opportunity, as frustrating as it was at times, to engage in the give and take about course requirements, various books that we might use, speakers we might invite, and so forth. We agreed that all students be required to participate in what we called a Community Action Project in order to receive credit for the course itself. The idea behind this was

to bring some aspects of the AIDS issue to a broader audience outside of the classroom. Students were encouraged to work in groups, although they were not required to do so. The term community "action" was used after our students rejected community "service" for some of the reasons Barber just mentioned earlier. The Community Action Project produced some imaginative results. Several students wrote a play called **Just Words** which was designed to make us use more sensitive language when discussing AIDS; the play was performed in the student theater before a large audience. Another group devised an AIDS education strategy for use in the residence halls. Two students performed a dance in honor of those living with AIDS and those who have died of AIDS, again before a public audience. A large group of students put together an art show reflecting on issues discussed in the course. The exhibit was later shown in a local library. Students also organized a condom distribution day where they distributed fact sheets about AIDS along with condoms on campus.

All three instructors were struck by the fact that many of our students knew very little about the topic. Some had previous AIDS courses and they were at an advantage compared to the 75-80 percent who had had no courses at all. Coming into the course, for example, many students didn't even know the distinction between being HIV positive and having full-blown AIDS. Moreover they had been subjected to ten years of popular culture and media socialization around this issue and we had lot of deconstructing to do. What this meant in practice was that our students thought of AIDS as largely a gay disease, one that couldn't possibly affect upper middle class whites such as themselves and we had to challenge that throughout.

We also found it very difficult to get students to link theory and practice. A significant number of them wanted to talk about feelings and emotions to the great consternation of the three faculty members. We tried to provide analytical frameworks, a critical evaluation scheme. In the planning process students said they wanted someone with AIDS to come to speak as if they needed to see someone in full flesh, you know, some kind of Zeus story, I don't know what was going on here. But there was a sense that this was very, very important to them and we tried to combat that throughout the entire course. Some of these problems may well be built into a course that deals with issues of sexuality and death, powerful, powerful issues that I had never confronted before in ten years of college teaching.

From my vantage point the most acceptable part of our course was the community action projects and if we did this course again I would suggest making these projects the central course requirement and build them in, grade them perhaps, structure them more, work with students and develop them in more mature ways. I'd like to end by suggesting a couple of things to tie in my response to what Boyte and Barber have already said. It seems to me that our goals as educators is to challenge the prevailing attitude of citizen passivity. I view both the approaches described by Ben and Harry as contributing to this important goal. In this sense, then, I'd like to think that their respective approaches can be complimentary rather than remain in tension with one another. There are so many barriers in our culture and our political and economic systems that prevent us from engaging in public issues in meaningful ways. We should celebrate the strengths of these approaches, allow them to inform us as we develop a critical pedagogy, one that we will need to challenge the prevailing passivity of our time.

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TIM STANTON

I hope I can offer some thoughts to push the discussion a little further. I speak from a community perspective. I became a community organizer after I graduated from college and did a lot of community work while in college. I became interested in the civic education aspects of community work and that gradually led me back into the academy where I now work with students at Stanford. Our center at Stanford is a large and still growing organization and we've been successful to the degree that we're now working with more than 2000 students each year who are involved in all kinds of community activity from very traditional volunteer service to the kinds of community action and community organizing that would be at the other end of the service advocacy spectrum. We do some of it well and we're learning how to do some of it better. And we've worked very hard to connect this activity with the academic curriculum to engage faculty in working with these students towards some of the goals that my colleagues here on the panel have articulated.

So I really welcome this meeting because in my many years of travail in this work in higher education it's been rare that these discussions have taken place at academic meetings. This is a kind of pivotal event in our work and I'm glad to be a part of it. I find what Ben and Harry offered us this morning to be two pieces of a constructive tension in my mind. Having come into this work from a service and community action perspective, I always held

suspect the notion that service alone will lead to civicly engaged citizens or more responsible citizens. Without a strong curricular component, service alone really is just an advanced form of recreation or even voyeurism for many students, particularly many of the students we have at a place like Stanford. And indeed, as Ben has pointed out, can be an exercise in subjectivism as opposed to real democratic dialogue or thinking.

I'm thinking of some of the research I've seen on the urban studies programs of the 60s and 70s which were aimed mainly at getting the white mainstream college population interested and concerned and knowledgeable about the issues and problems of urban minorities. The research showed that those programs tended to reinforce and strengthen the biases and attitudes which students brought with them when they went into those communities. In many cases this was due to the lack of opportunity for critical reflection and analysis about what students were seeing and experiencing. And as hard as we work on that problem I don't know if we've succeeded a great deal. Many of you may have seen an article in **Mother Jones** a couple of years ago in which a Stanford student was quoted as saying her experience at a homeless shelter was the most rewarding and educational experience of her time at Stanford and she only hoped her grandchildren would have the same opportunity. So what is it we need to do and how are we going to move beyond having our students make statements like that? I wonder what Harry's students do when they're in a community and how their experience is connected to the kind of conceptual exchange that he's trying to bring about. That's so important and my own experience of trying to do it has been such a challenge and it's so difficult. I also wonder about Ben's feeling that we must simply mandate this kind of education and I worry about whether we can do that well.

So let me push a little further by discussing a few challenges that arise out of my work. The first has to do with the community we aim to have our students serve. I would argue, and I don't think I'd get a lot of resistance here, that students ought to do no harm in the community while they're out there. When I took my first job in higher education after doing community organizing work I talked to the folks in the community who had been my friends and colleagues about placing my students with them. They said they would be delighted to collaborate but they wondered why my institution was going to get the FTE from the state for the instruction we were asking them to do. There needs to be a lot more clarity than I think we have now about what students are to do, who is to be responsible for it, and who will evaluate it. On another level there's a need to think about how we in the academy relate to our community partners. I agree with Ben that we should model in our programs the kind of democratic community we're trying to teach our students about. I don't think many town-gown relationships exhibit that model so we have to think about it.

The second challenge relates to pedagogy. I think that's already been raised. If we're really serious about having students examine issues of charity, philanthropy, altruism, enlightened self-interest, public rights, and have them relate those issues and concepts to observed practice in the context of service learning where they're responsible for at least doing no harm, we must think about the teaching process. How do we make this happen? I don't think it happens by accident. This pedagogy issue cross-cuts the communitarian-public life issues that Ben and Harry have raised because we need to reconstruct a civic community in our classrooms as Craig has said – a learning community with individuals empowered to work for both self and group interests. The challenge is to help students think rigorously about what they're experiencing, to help them learn how to understand the world and their place in it and then to integrate their perceptions with other people's ideas.

The third challenge relates to the source of the questions we address. Do they simply come from our lectures, our books, our disciplines, or do they in fact arise from the experience in the community and the problems that our community partners are facing or even from the kinds of people that our students are engaged with? If we're truly going to have democratic exchange in our classrooms and in our programs we've got to have a wide, diverse community of people – staff, faculty, students and community members engaged in the conversation. □

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LESLIE HILL

I'd like to raise two important subjects that affect the objectives and the pedagogical practices of civic education. The first is power and the second is the nature of the citizen we assume to be at the center of political practice. Power is a critical element of our social lives and adheres to the sites in which civic education takes place, the community and the classroom. To ignore power relations is to leave unexamined one of the most critical factors shaping the nature of political practice and to miss an opportunity to question the assumptions on which current lamentable patterns of discrimination are based. If the aim of civic education is to develop citizens who act as agents in self-determining interaction with others, then we have to enhance their capacity to apprehend consciously the nature and uses of power and challenge them to think about alternative conceptions and uses of power that foster democracy.

Power in the popular imagination and in our public discourse is most often conceived to be hierarchical and an instrument of domination, even as it is often contested.

Power as domination structures interaction among and between citizens and between them and the institutions of government. But alternative notions and practices of power are available that are much more conducive to supporting public conversations in which people have a stake in a political community and can engage with each other as equals in order to solve problems. But alternative practices of power cannot be engendered without some recognition of the nature of power and some conscious efforts to do so. Moreover, we cannot help students develop a sense of efficacy as political actors without challenging assumptions and popular beliefs about power.

In order to be effective, then, I argue that civic education programs must include power as one of their central subjects and employ specific methods to help students learn to analyze the nature and operation of the power relations at play in a given situation in order to demystify them and thus avoid becoming demobilized by them. One way to do this is to pay attention to power in the classroom. My colleagues have spoken about the need to pay close attention to our pedagogical practices. I agree that practicing democracy should begin in our workplace and the students' workplace, which is the classroom. Our classrooms provide handy opportunities for faculty to engage in civic education and an important occasion to structure and guide classroom learning in ways that establish the space to practice politics, to develop habits of engagement, to have conversations that promote mutual recognition, attempts at listening, reflection and judgement, all skills necessary to the practice of democratic politics. It takes time and effort to begin to transform classrooms into settings for non-hierarchical processes of interaction where people really can practice those skills essential for deliberative democracy.

And now my second point. What notion of citizenship do we put into play when we design curricula and experiential opportunities for civic education? My thinking about this as about power is informed by the critiques of liberal formulations of the citizen as an abstracted self-interested individual. Studies of African-American politics and feminine theory scholarship have emphasized the significance of embodiment. In cultures that assign political meaning to biological characteristics such as race and gender and to sexual practices, it is crucial to examine the fact that each of us enters politics as embodied subjects with our own and others' assumptions about our political roles. W.B. DuBois has written about double consciousness, about the inside or outside of women or men of African descent in the American polity. And the debates about abortion and laws regulating same-sex couples remind us of the significance of the body in deliberations about the rights of citizens and the obligations of government.

The question for us is how assumptions about who is the proper citizen establish or diminish possibilities for participation and for good deliberation, how they shape the possibility for members of the polity to see themselves in relation to others. Kathleen Jones and a number of other feminist writers on political theory have argued that the dominant identification and definition of citizens is derived from group affiliations with particular race, gender and class characteristics. This insight prompts us to raise such questions as: How might our civic conversation expand both in terms of who is envisioned as a participant and how that person might see herself in relation to others in the conversation? How might that conversation expand if our definition of citizenship had at its center a black domestic worker from East Harlem? What would politics in a deliberative democracy look like if we assumed poor women of color to be their central subject and necessary participants?

I raise these questions about embodiment and relations briefly here in order to stimulate some reflection on the assumptions about who is present as subject and participant in civic education and on what can be learned in experiential learning sites. Civic education carefully designed can subvert, and I argue should subvert, the conceptual and mythological biases revolving around gender, class and race. That kind of civic education can provide opportunities for students to see themselves as empowered political actors and to locate themselves in various communities.

I teach a class called Black Women in the Americas which attempts to determine the lot of black women in the political economy of the Americas. Most of the students who are enrolled in that course are white middle class or upper class students who populate the small private colleges in New England. Most of them have grown up in suburban communities and have had little contact, certainly little intimate contact, with people of color. I require them to do an interview with a woman of color over 30 years old. What this does, I think, is important for them to see themselves as part of a polity in which they have to deal with people who are not like them. In fact, it is an exercise to help them locate themselves. I began another course last fall called Gender in the States and one of the most useful exercises was to have each of the students again locate themselves by doing a political genealogy of women in their family so they could look specifically at some of the political issues we would be talking about and see themselves in their own particularity as well as in relation to broader issues of poorer citizens.

The overarching point I am making is that it's important to design civic education in such a way that students can locate themselves, not just in relation to some universalized notion of political man, but in relation to others, cognizant of differences, and thus equip themselves to look for common ground they share with different others whom they come to see as legitimate political players.

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Article

PHILANTHROPY AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

Robert L. Payton

After considerable debate, and with the help of a colleague, I have come to define philanthropy with a question: **When is voluntary action for the public good?** The question highlights the difficulty of creating a truly universal but still meaningful definition. The word voluntary stresses the contrast between voluntary giving and taxation, voluntary service and conscription. The term public good emphasizes the contrast between being narrowly concerned about our own welfare and being more generally concerned about the welfare of others, especially those for whom we have no formal responsibility.

This article grows out of reflections on the place of voluntary action for the public good in a university education. The immediate purpose is to raise questions about university education itself – about the meaning of the term "liberal education," about the relationship between teaching and research (especially in those institutions which now call themselves "research universities"), and most importantly about the mission of the university. The fact that philanthropy is a social practice means that the study of philanthropy might engage the university in a re-examination of its relationship to the urgent issues of society.

Voluntary action for the public good leads to consideration of basic human needs and eventually to human well-being more generally. The immediate issues are those raised when one reflects on the extent to which self-help, mutual aid, government assistance, or philanthropy are implicated in meeting the needs of the poor, the disabled, the homeless, the oppressed. That such matters are persistently problematic is underlined by comparing the similarities of the debates of a century ago on these topics with the debates of today. To what extent do individuals in need "deserve" our help? To what extent must help be offered with "compassion" or with "respect for the dignity" of the recipient? To what extent are basic human needs matters of justice and right rather than matters of desert and compassion?

In the United States voluntary action for the public good is highly organized. No nation, to my knowledge, has ever relied as extensively on voluntary association to effect the public business as this one. The scale of philanthropy has given rise to the notion of a three-sector society, aligning a third sector of philanthropy alongside a first sector of government and a second sector of the private marketplace. A small but powerful field of the third sector is now called "advocacy" (what was not long ago done under the the rubric of "reform"). It is frequently the function of advocacy organizations in the third sector to articulate the failures of the government and the marketplace – and often to point out the inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and other weaknesses of philanthropy itself. In the context of a three-sector society, advocates of social action are often at the vanguard of changing the social agenda of the society. My impression is that the initiatives of voluntary associations are very often at the forefront of social movements – that morally the other two sectors are usually led by the third.

The study of the role of philanthropy in its role as activist and self-appointed social conscience is why I find Clifford Geertz's phrase, "the social history of the moral imagination," so apt a description of what the field of philanthropic studies is about. The study of philanthropy, quite as profoundly as the study of government, is the study of competing visions of the good society.

The core of the idea of "charity" – the alleviation of suffering – has always been a matter of great philanthropic interest. Religion, education, health, and welfare lead the claims on voluntary giving. These issues require attention to the shifting boundaries among the three sectors; the study of philanthropy requires attention to the self-help and mutual aid of the private sector, to the tax-supported assistance provided through the governmental sector, and to the voluntary service and voluntary giving provided by the philanthropic sector.

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The purposes of social action are complex, the sources of social action are diverse, the results of social action are ambiguous. The motivations of voluntary service are all of these and more, as Robert Wuthnow's new book, **Acts of Compassion** brings out. To be engaged in voluntary action for the public good is to test the commonly-accepted notions of "self-interest" and to go beyond what government requires. The psychological consequences seem profoundly related to notions of self-esteem and the sense of self-worth. The study of philanthropy thus engages one in particular visions of the good life as well as the underlying notion that such a thing as a "good life" is possible.

The argument of this article is that the study of philanthropy presents the university with embarrassing challenges to its dominant values and practices. The study of philanthropy takes us back to the core ideas of liberal education and the question of how to achieve the good society and the good life. Philanthropy is an important subject of liberal education because it examines the role of good works in shaping our conceptions of the good society and the good life.

Liberal education is the search for understanding of open-ended social issues. Liberal education is not confined to the demonstrative proofs of science or limited to the critical thinking modes of cognitive rationality. It is more than a series of problem-solving exercises. The problems of liberal education remain problematic. Liberal education does not provide training in the clinical treatment of child abuse, for example, nor does it come to closure about legal decisions determining the right of government agencies to intervene in the privacy of families in order to prevent child abuse. Yet liberal education is the cultivation of the moral imagination – the ability to grapple with problems like child abuse.

Liberal education is exploratory discourse. Liberal education sees "the complexity of things," especially the complexity of ethical and social values with their dilemmas, paradoxes, and ambiguities. The method of exploratory discourse is central to life in a democracy. It is verbal, personal, direct involvement in the search for common meanings as well as common purposes.

The familiar setting of a small group coming together to talk about what should happen next is illustrative of what I mean. The group has some agreed-upon reason to come together, a reason that goes beyond the self-interest of those present – for example, a voluntary association that provides a half-way house for alcoholic and abused women. If the immediate purpose is to move from point B to point C – say, the addition of a full-time staff member – there is implied that at some later time the group might also discuss how to move from point R to point S – the relationship between the paid staff and volunteers, to use a familiar example. Almost none of the discourse skills provided by university education are directly applicable: open-ended social issues do not lend themselves to scientific proof; the issues are not limited to polarized positions for debate; the group will be impatient if one of its members decides to make a speech or to offer an autobiographical confession. Untutored in it though we are, exploratory discourse is our most commonly shared mode of intellectual work.

The end of liberal education is preparation for action. The notion of liberal education is grounded in the classical notion of education for responsible citizenship and the good life, that is, for participation as a citizen in the good society. As many scholars have pointed out, Aristotle's **Politics** and his **Ethics** were originally one treatise rather than two. The focus of classical liberal education was the community. In its modern form, liberal education more fully explores individuality and autonomy. Modern liberal education carries the notion of citizenship and public service beyond the work of government, just as it demands more than meeting private needs. Liberal education thus draws the student toward the perspectives of the third sector, where the values of autonomy and community often conflict despite their inherent call for cooperation and balance. Liberal education prepares for action in a three-sector society.

Liberal education may involve training in scholarship but scholarship as a professional goal is not its purpose. In this sense the study of generosity as the mean between extravagance and stinginess in Book IV of Aristotle's **Ethics** is not a means of professional advancement but a means towards discourse about the good society; the study of Thomas Aquinas on almsgiving is not simply to cultivate a theological virtue but a practical one; the study of the Social Gospel movement is not simply a reconstruction of things past but an instrument of social understanding today.

"Liberal education" is not the same thing as "liberal arts." The "liberal arts" are not the same thing as the "humanities and social sciences." To study the humanities and social sciences is to be immersed in a specialized and professionalized field of scholarship. To acquire the liberal arts is to master the tools of inquiry that lead beyond specialization towards integration and interpretation. To achieve the end of liberal education is to bring the intellectual and moral virtues into harmony for the benefit of the good society and the good life. The study of philanthropy requires all three: the humanities and social sciences, the liberal arts, and liberal education.

Philanthropy combines thought, action, and passion. (The phrase is the title of a collection of essays by the philosopher Richard P. McKeon.) Philanthropy is reflection on action in the form of voluntary interventions in the lives of others for their benefit. The action is for others – specifically, for those others for whom one has no formal responsibility. Philanthropy is about good *works*, it is not simply about benevolence, which can suggest good will without action. Philanthropic action is undertaken with

no public mandate. Reflection is called for (if too seldom engaged in) because the first law of philanthropy is borrowed from the first law of medicine: *seek to do good, but do no harm*. When that principle is followed as a guide, reflection on the purpose and the outcome of action is morally if not legally obligatory.

The goodness implied in love of humanity and in good works is often assumed to be generous and large in spirit. Good works in fact often entail arrogance, stubborness, single-mindedness, anger, and resentment. The practice of philanthropy is unavoidably normative and emotional, at least to some extent. Much action for environmental reform or animal rights, for example, is often strident, contentious, and confrontational. The action strategies are often quite deliberate; the passion is real and yet can be quite calculating at the same time. The exploitation of sentiment in fund raising appeals to alleviate famine conditions in Ethiopia and the Sudan lead to "compassion fatigue." Voluntary associations advancing the cause of euthanasia test the limits of advocacy, morality, and the law.

The rhetoric of philanthropy in practice is meat for examination of the ethics of rhetoric in liberal education. The practice of philanthropy in modern democracy captures all the virtues and vices manifested in social action, whether enlightened or pathological. The study of philanthropy in thought and discourse must somehow, if it is to face up to the full reality of human behavior, deal with the pathologies of philanthropic practice – that is, with philanthropic practice, warts and all.

It seems ironic at this point to insist that **philanthropy is a virtue.** If philanthropy is a virtue, misanthropy is a vice. Philanthropy is praised and misanthropy is condemned, even though admittedly there can be confusion between the two. The National Association for the Advancement of White People (a voluntary association although presumably not eligible for tax exemption) seems to exploit hatred of specific others rather than love as its contribution to the public good. It can argue that it, too, serves the public good, and its members (some of them at least), can feel quite self-righteous about their courageous defense of their ethnic or racial values and rights. In their eyes, they are philanthropic – acting voluntarily for the public good. But are such forms of "philanthropy" virtuous? If one applies John Dewey's definition of a virtue as wholehearted, persistent, and impartial – as might happen in a liberal education – the differences and similarities among the NAAWP, the NAACP, and, say, the National Conference of Christians and Jews might emerge in sharper relief. Virtues are balanced excellences of intellect and behavior. When individuals go beyond what is called for or expected to serve others or the community at large, their actions are deemed worthy of praise. When the motives or results of their actions are destructive, they are condemned. To seek to improve the lives of others or to work for the common good is to act with moral consequences. The outcomes sought by liberal education include not only the ability but the willingness to pass judgment – to distribute praise or blame – on the actions (and their consequences) of philanthropy.

The critique of bias. The study of philanthropy in the university has been criticized as an exercise in moral boosterism. It is thus arguably unfit for inclusion in the liberal arts, which are said to require detachment – thought rather than action, action stripped of passion. To teach philanthropy is seen as indoctrination; to teach *about* philanthropy may be acceptable if purged of any normative content and if philanthropic practice is kept at a distance. Such is the now-accepted model of religion in the university, as my colleague Jan Shipps has pointed out. In the 19th century we taught religion and its pracice; in the 20th century we teach *about* religion and its practice. The question of whether such powerful aspects of our lives as faith and works can be understood in any profound way when denuded of the very qualities that makes them powerful in the first place is a question that is simply avoided in the university these days.

In some respects the quest for scientific rigor and detachment may have led to implicit formulation of a methodological orthodoxy that – inadvertently and with the best of intentions – happens also to subordinate free speech and to compromise academic freedom.

The study of philanthropy can be detached and, I think, desiccated; the study of philanthropy can permit practice to overwhelm theory and in the process reduce education to training. If the choice is between specialization and integration, one or the other, we will sacrifice competence on the one hand or understanding on the other. In either case, if those are our only choices, bringing philanthropy into the university will be a hollow victory.

Philanthropy is among the best available educational concepts by which to hold these tensions in balance. The tension between specialization and integration of knowledge; the tension between detachment and engagement; the tension between the normative and the diffident; the tension between the "humanistic" and the "scientific;" the tension between the professional self-interest of the academy and the claims of the public good. To use the word tension accepts the presence of both and the inevitability of conflicting values. In the study of voluntary action will be found the contesting claims of autonomy and community, of ethnicity and nationality, of rights and privileges. I see that as a virtue because those are elements of the full human experience we seek to understand.

If the university is seen as the guardian of public discourse, then to the extent that discourse is about open-ended social issues and the exercise of the moral imagination, philanthropy is the context; exploratory discourse is the vehicle; and liberal education is the goal. □

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Back Page Commentary

THE FAILURE OF COMMUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Carole Hamner

Proponents of civic education should be wary of exploring curriculum revisions while overlooking the most obvious and unavoidable – the sense of community in a particular college or university. By "sense of community" I refer not to school spirit at a ball game, but rather to a pervasive atmosphere of toleration and respect between administrators, faculty, and students. A recent survey of professors of political science and sociology across the country alerts us to the apparent, but perhaps neglected fact, that institutions of higher education are failing to foster and sustain a sense of community. The comments of many professors suggest that their institutions are places more of mutual estrangement than common interests, and that their administrations provide poor examples of democratic practices.

Ironically, the frustration these professors expressed in regard to their institutions surfaced in a report giving an otherwise positive picture of the civic education of young adults at the college level. The University of Virginia Center for Survey Research (CSR) conducted a nationwide survey of professors of political science and sociology to determine the extent to which faculty in these two disciplines supported civic education and encouraged students to participate in community affairs both by course requirements and by their own example. CSR found that the large majority of professors surveyed endorsed a curriculum that would encourage students both to engage conceptually and to participate actively in political life and civic affairs. The survey, however, qualified these findings in a couple ways. First, it admitted that respondents who teach at large research universities were less supportive of the goals of civic education than their counterparts in small colleges. Second, the study reported that many respondents were dissatisifed with the role their institutions were playing in the education of students for leadership and life in general.

The bright picture of civic education emerging from the first part of the study was somewhat dimmed by the frustration professors voiced about their own institutions. Taken as a whole, their remarks suggest a slackening of the ties that once united an academic community. The discontent the respondents expressed with regard to administrators, students, and colleagues seems symptomatic of an increasingly factional and divisive academy.

The professors surveyed expressed frustration with the bureaucratic nature of their institutions and distrust of the administration in general. In response to the open-ended question: "In your judgment, how could your college or university better prepare students for their future roles?" many voiced a sense of alienation from their institutions. While the ivory tower has never been a utopian community, the level of dissatisfaction evident in their comments reflects a breakdown of communication between faculty and administration.

The faculty were disgruntled with administrators at their colleges and universities but they also expressed disappointment in their students. Whereas their dissatisfaction with the administration resulted from its insensitivity and inaccessibility, its unwillingness to talk, their comments about students revealed a different type of communication problem amounting to the lack of a common language. Some respondents claimed that their students were ill-prepared academically and not in possession of adequate communication skills to engage in profitable dialogue. Others mentioned the negative influence of large lecture classes that diminish the rapport between a teacher and individual learners and encourage passivity in students. The erosion of the relationship between teacher and student obviously bodes ill for all education, but especially the training of future citizens. How can young adults develop a public voice and learn the arts of debate, if they attend only lecture courses that do not accommodate student participation?

The frustrations of the professors were also directed at fellow faculty members. One professor alluded to "the prevailing cynicism of much of the faculty." Another suggested that the University "encourage creative faculty and stop valorizing mediocrity and preparing students for low and middle management jobs in the corporations of the city." Others surveyed registered their discontent with the ideological polarization of academic departments. Several comments echoed this sentiment. For example, in response to the question asking what the university could do to prepare students for civic roles, one respondent answered: "It could do so by fostering more authentic political debate on civic issues, rather than merely exchanging ideologically canned positions."

The debate in the academy between the so-called "politically correct" contingent and its companion reactionary movements has been heated, unflagging and well-documented. It is not my intention to discuss the respective positions of opposing camps, but rather to underscore the divisive atmosphere resulting from such an ideological encampment. A system of higher education that escorts students to one extreme or the other, but neglects any accessible middle ground, has alarming ramifications for the training of the next generation's citizens. A program of civic education stressing deliberation and consensus building may have difficulty taking root in an academic setting where individual professors pay allegiance to one or another ruling ideology and where the airing of grievances passes for constructive dialogue.

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